



Joseph Jonas Howe Pamphlet

A SERMON:

PREACHED IN HOLY TRINITY CHURCH,

ST. MARTINS, N. B.

BEFORE

ST. MARTINS DIVISION, No. 164,

SONS OF TEMPERANCE,

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24th, 1889,

BY

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RECTOR OF THE PARISH.

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A SERMON.

ISAIAH XXVII. 7.—“ They have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way.”

Intemperance is, undoubtedly, one of the greatest social problems, if not the greatest, of our own day. It has been dealt with by the wisest statesmen of almost every civilized nation upon the face of the earth. It has been the subject of more legislation, perhaps, than any other single question known. Medical men have given serious thought, thorough investigation, and multiplied books, to show the very detrimental effect excessive alcoholic drinking has upon man. The pulpits of the land, have, almost without an exception, given forth no uncertain sound. The verdict of all is unanimous in declaring intemperance an unmitigated evil. An enemy to the State, an enemy to the soul, an enemy to the body of every human being.

It will be unnecessary for me to enter into any elaborate display of proofs, my friends, in order to convince you that what I have just said is the truth. You find its proof within the pages of the inspired Scriptures; you find its truth in every newspaper that falls into your hand; your own eyes have witnessed its truth in every place in which you have ever lived. I do, therefore, take it for granted, at the start, that each and every one of you here present to-night do realize the awful evil that intemperance works in the individual, the home, and the community.

There is a temptation, on an occasion like this, for the preacher, in order to reach the sympathy of his hearers, to picture before their eyes scenes which fairly curdle the blood and turn the heart to stone, of which the accursed drink is the cause; to write in letters of blood the crimes, the viciousness, the woes, and the inhumanities that have been perpetrated under the influence of the deadly poison. My own experience, during the three years spent in a parish in a large city in the United States, would furnish me with such details in abundance; but it is unnecessary.

We might go into a discussion of the present condition of the law relating to the liquor traffic; *why* it is now here in-operative in our village. We might consider the best method of stopping the sale of rum altogether. In fact, our subject opens up such a large field of enquiry that one might go on forever. Unless I have mistaken the tenor of your invitation,

you desire that I shall speak to you words that may help us, even here, and now, to solve the question in such a way that we shall be able to banish from our midst the selling of rum, the drinking of rum, and the misery and degradation which are the consequences of its use.

I shall, therefore, have to speak to you of (1) The Drunkard ; (2) The Rumseller ; (3) And the duty devolving upon those of us who are opposed to the rum traffic in toto.

1. *The Drunkard.* I want you to follow me through a bit of very ancient history in order to show you that the curse of drinking to excess is no new thing. Let us turn to the Old Testament, where we will take up, briefly, the history of every instance given of those who drank too much liquor. I desire you particularly to notice that in every case recorded there, ruin, either to themselves or to those near them by ties of love or protection, was the result.

NOAH, the preacher of Righteousness, coming out of the ark he planted a vineyard ! He made wine of its fruit, and, ignorant of the properties of the liquor, drank enough to make him drunk. While in a state of intoxication he was disrespectfully treated by a son, who received, for his unseemly conduct, his father's solemn curse. The fact that Noah did not know the effects produced by drinking the wine, and that there was no evil intention in his heart, serves only to heighten the effect of the picture, and proves how dangerous and poisonous liquor, even the best, is to man.

Next in order comes LOT, the nephew of Abraham. While in a state of intoxication his daughters came in unto him, and made him a partaker of the most revolting and abominable sin of incest recorded on the pages of Holy Writ.

NABAL, who lived in the reign of King David, was a drunken sot. The effects of his continual drinking ruined his disposition, and made him churlish and hateful to everyone. He treated his king with such marked contempt and meanness that GOD smote him with death instantly as a punishment.

ELAH was one of the kings of Israel. He was, notwithstanding his exalted position, a drunkard. Of him we read : "*And his servant, Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was drinking himself drunk : and Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, and reigned in his stead.*" This king lost his life, and his kingdom, by drinking to excess, thus giving opportunity to his murderer.

BEN HADAD was the king of Syria. "*He was drinking himself drunk in his pavillion,*" instead of being at his post, and taking charge of the battle. For this neglect all his

princes were slain, the battle was lost, and he barely escaped with his life on a swift horse.

It was while BELSHAZZER, king of Babylon, was holding a *drunken* feast with his lords that there appeared the writing on the wall, GOD'S just sentence : "*Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting, thy kingdom is taken from thee and given to the Medes and Persians.*"

The summary of the drunkards in the Old Testament, and the result of their indulgence may be given thus : Out of six cases, three suffer death. Another, causes the death of all his princes, the loss of the battle, a narrow escape with his own life. The cursing of a son, the sin of incest, the loss of a kingdom, include the other cases. The drunkard of to-day is just the same as he has always been, in every stage of the world's history, an object of pity, *not* of contempt. We may trace his downward course. The first effects of drink are pleasant ! The feelings and faculties are exalted into a state of unusual activity. The troubles that perplex him disappear, his heart is light and merry, and he becomes very happy. Soon, whenever he is tried by anxieties, worried with the cares of life, he seeks again the fatal cup, until it becomes the antidote of every ill. After the system becomes accustomed to the stimulant, the dose is increased. The result is soon apparent. The senses become hazy ; a filmy haze obscures the vision ; the head seems lighter than usual, and it becomes impossible to walk straight. Then things appear double, or flit confusedly before the eyes. He loses judgment and discretion, and pours forth, with stammering speech, all he knows. He becomes boisterous, ridiculous, and sinks at length, into a mere animal. Everything about him becomes moveable ; houses, trees and companions seem drunken, and he alone sober. Then comes the final stage, and he falls to the ground dead drunk. The drunkard knows all this from bitter experience, and yet the poor being goes through the same sufferings again and again. The system cannot long endure this outrage, and either an early grave, a mad-house, or an alms-house hides his shame from the world. Herein we see the dreadful power of liquor. Taste it and you become its slave ! Drink it and you are doomed !

The beautiful gazelle, as it glides with graceful form o'er hill and dale, suddenly comes upon its deadly foe, the serpent. While it can run with the swiftness of the wind, and its enemy can only crawl along the ground, it is powerless to move ! The glance of the serpent's eye paralyzes the gentle creature. By the serpent it is held as if rooted to the spot—held until it is devoured. So the poor drunkard, while yet a man, able

to work with head and hands, a kind father, a good husband, an honest neighbour, an upright Christian, he meets his foe, the deadly drink. He has self-will. He could go away and leave it untouched, but he seems riveted to the spot, unable to move, until he has swallowed the poison that works his ruin.

The second head upon which I wish to speak is the *Rum-seller*. For him we have no need of pity. In him there is nothing to enlist our sympathy. In the rum-seller we behold an object worthy only of the deepest indignation and most severe reproof. We may notice, in the first place, that the rum-seller lives under the curse of a just GOD: "*Cursed be he that putteth the bottle to his neighbor's lips.*" This is the position in which he stands before GOD. Let us see how he is placed before men. It is a well understood, and universally accepted principle of law, that he who sells, or gives away, what will injure or cause the death of another, knowing it to be injurious, is responsible for any harm that may follow. A man goes to a drug store to buy arsenic or morphia. The laws of the land forbid such sales, except under certain circumstances. Why? Because it is the work of the law to protect the lives and property of the citizens. And the druggist does not complain that the law is unjust. He knows it is for the good of all that the law should be as it is, and obeys it. And yet, while certain poisons are restricted in their sale, the rum-seller stands behind his counter and deals out, to all who have the money to pay, a deadlier poison than any of these, law or no law, Scott Act or license. A poison that has, directly and indirectly, caused more deaths than were ever lost on all the battle fields of Europe; that has made more widows and orphans than all the storms that ever swept the broad Atlantic; that has broken more hearts, and destroyed more homes than all the plagues and pestilences that ever visited this earth.

There are two forces at work in our world to-day. Good and evil. When GOD, for the sin of the angels, cast them out of heaven, it is said that they determined to have their revenge by destroying all the precious souls, for which no less a price was to be paid than the blood of Jesus Christ. Every intelligent man is on the side of good or evil. Either a co-worker with GOD for the right, or with the devil for wrong. Now, the rum-seller places himself very prominently on the side of the devil. He makes his money by helping the devil. He helps the devil, and the devil helps him. He helps the devil by selling that which destroys the soul. The devil helps him by tempting men to enter his shop and buy

his liquor. Do you believe a man was ever prompted to enter a grog shop by his good angel? Certainly, you do not! The rum-seller's averice knows no limits. His heart, hardened by sights of wretchedness and misery, can feel no pity, or feel anything akin to sympathy. The poor drunkard with his last penny, that should go to buy bread for his needy family, finds the rum-seller ready to take it, and ask no questions. The beardless boy, away from home, and the care and influence of a loving mother, if he wants to be a man, thinks he must learn to drink rum. If he has the one all-essential thing—money—he can enter the bar-room, and drink and drink again, till he falls senseless on the floor. There are no distinctions as to age, or sex, or position, to the rum-seller—all are equally lawful prey, if they can add to his wealth.

Then we find, in our village here, that six days are not enough to increase the unrighteous mammon of the liquor dealers. In every kind of legitimate business men can earn enough, and yet take one day on which to rest and worship GOD. What are the laws of Almighty GOD to the rum-seller? He is working for the other side, where his interests lie, and Sunday and Monday and all days are alike to him!

Did any of you ever see a vulture? He is the most hateful bird that lives. Even the smell of him will cause nausea. He is a carrion-bird; disgusting to look at; repulsive to every sense of man. His powers of vision are most remarkable, and with his sharp eye he can detect, miles and miles o'er the plain, an exhausted camel or other beast of burden. He gloats over the prospect. Every effort the poor beast makes to toil on disappoints and annoys him; every sign of weakness and failing strength fills him with pleasure and delight. When at length the poor beast falls beneath his burden, and is left by the caravan to die, the vulture sweeps down upon him, and e'er the breath leaves the body, begins to tear him to pieces. The rum-seller is the human vulture. Who ever saw a rum-seller, who kept the money that came over the bar, with a refined and gentle face? Why does this business brand with its mark the face of every man who shares in it, and make it coarse, sensual, brutal? What gives to the eye the cunning, the deceitful look? Every struggle a drinking man makes to overcome his passion for strong drink and become a sober man, is eagerly watched by the vulture-eyed seller. When a would-be victim escapes, he is full of disappointment. He sees with delight, in the more frequent visits of a customer, a chance before long of a prey whose pockets he can pick at pleasure. Why does the rum-seller hate the voice of the Christian minister when he speaks

GOD's truth. Why does he hate temperance societies? Why? Because they are working to deprive him of his prey. The rum-seller makes all his money from the weaknesses, the infirmities, the failures of his brethren? He is a carrion-bird, who derives his substance from the dying bodies of those whose death he hastens.

O my brethren, when I think of the Judgment Day, I shudder when I see the accounts the rum-seller will find there. We have, even the very best one among us, to take care lest we shall hear with grief and not with joy, the verdict pronounced upon us. There is none among us who can thank GOD that we are not as other men are; but yet, even the worst men, if they are murderers, have at most but caused the deaths of a few. The rum-seller must answer for hundreds of his fellow-creatures' lives. If we have committed adultery, rum has caused ten thousand adulteries. If we have sworn and blasphemed the name of our most holy GOD, rum has to answer for countless blasphemies. The sins that rum has caused in this parish will be, in a great measure, laid at the doors of those who, in spite of warning and entreaty, in defiance of all justice and right, *sell* the drink. I have tried to show you the position in which the rum-seller stands in relation to GOD and man, as well as the motives that urge him to sell, and the character that rum-selling always gives. We ought to pray GOD that He will, of His great mercy, turn the hearts of those who traffic in strong drink, so that they be converted, and brought to a better mind.

What, then, may I ask, is the duty of those who are opposed to the selling of strong drink? Some favor an appeal to the civil law to stop, or at least to regulate, its sale. I do not! My experience has been that the law is not to be depended upon. When men try to legislate on the rum question, they treat the whole subject as one not of morals, but of pure policy. If the majority of wealthy voters favor free rum, the candidate for parliament, if he wants to be elected, must promise to vote as those whose money and influence have secured him his seat, desire. As with the individual, so with the party—if it wishes to hold office it must make, or must not make, laws which will displease the majority of voters. As a matter of principle, the "Scott Act" is the only law we can support. As it is carried out and enforced, it is a fraud. It means *free* rum; it means *poor* rum; it shuts up all *public* bars, but turns every other house, in the poorer districts of large cities and towns, into private drinking places, where those who have nothing to lose by conviction are willing to run the risks of selling for the profit it brings.

The public officials have no sympathy with the "Scott Act," and do not really and conscientiously try to enforce it. What we must strive to do is to educate the morals of the people, and in time they will demand that this "Act" *shall* be most rigidly enforced even to the very letter of the law.

There is no policy so utterly at variance with our profession as temperance men and women, or so detrimental to the cause we hold dear, as that of idleness—of doing nothing. If we are really sincere—if we do believe from the very bottom of our hearts that intemperance is a great evil, and that it is helped on by the open sale of liquor—we shall be up and doing all in our power to stop such sales. There are many Christians who do nothing towards "working out their own salvation," and yet expect to be wafted straight to heaven "on flowery beds of ease," without a single effort on their part. So there are plenty of so-called Temperance men who expect to see the monster of intemperance banished from our midst without any action on their part tending to such a desirable result. All the forces at our command are moral ones, and they can be used with great effect.

It is our first duty to train our children to fear GOD, and also to fear the devil and all the means he uses to do harm. We must impress upon the minds of the young that liquor, except when used as God intended it to be used, is a thing to be afraid of. That it is an active poison, to be shunned by them as they would shun a wild beast.

Next, we must teach them that a drunkard cannot be a good man, but that he is on the same level as the thief, the profane swearer, yes, as a murderer (for to murder one's self is as great a crime as to take another's life) are objects to be avoided, but still are subjects for pity and for prayers.

We ought to call things by their right names, too, before our children. I have no sympathy with a "namby-pamby" sentimentality which seeks to call good evil, and evil good. We ought to teach our girls to regard every man who habitually uses strong drink, as thereby utterly disqualified for the position of either lover or husband, and not allow them to be deceived by those who salve over such things as drunkenness by saying that "Mr. A. is a good-hearted, honest fellow, and only goes on a "time" once in a while."

Our treatment of the rum-seller ought to be at once honest, straightforward, and determined.

We cannot, and ought not, to recognize those in our very midst who sell rum to men, women, and children on Sundays as well as week days, as good Christians and honorable citizens. They ought not to be admitted into the sanctity of

our homes, or acknowledged as fit companions for our sons and husbands. No Christian body, founded either by Divine or human authority, can admit the rum-seller to its communion without violating the very name it bears. By the rum-seller's life is violated every vow of Holy Baptism, and he is in fact self-excommunicated.

We ought not to allow the retailers of rum in our village to be under any misapprehension in regard to our feelings in this matter, and I believe that we ought to take steps at once to notify them of our strong abhorrence of their doings.

A good method of doing this would be to draw up a petition of protest against their constant violation of the sanctity of the Lord's Day, and the sale of liquor at *all* times. Every minister of GOD, Catholic and Protestant, would, I know, gladly sign it. Every man and woman, of whatever name or nationality, would sign it, if he or she has the welfare of our people at heart. Then let the protest be sent to those whose business is to sell the deadly drink.

We have no use whatever for the rum-shop. When liquor is required for sickness, or other legitimate purposes, we can get it at the druggists, where it is purer and better, and for one-third less the price charged by the rum-sellers.

This protest will not stop the sale of rum, or close the dram-shops; but we can by this means succeed in placing rum-selling under the ban of every good man and woman, as it is already under the curse of Almighty GOD.

Let us not fear to do right. No great or good result was ever attained without many efforts, and much self-sacrifice. GOD will bless every step we take to overthrow the evils of intemperance, and to save our fellow-men from becoming its victims.

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."*

I close, but not without first commending the great cause of Temperance to your prayers. Do not cease to pray that GOD "will strengthen the weak hands and feeble knees" of His watchmen, that they may declare without flinching the whole counsel of GOD; that He will be gracious unto Zion, and remove, in His own good time and in His own good way, this great stumbling-block of Intemperance from the path of every man who desires "to be numbered with His saints in glory everlasting."

He has promised, and He will not fail: *"Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find."*

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